

THE CONDOR

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Ornithology



Volume VI

March-April, 1904

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JOSEPH GRINNELL,
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BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER FEEDING YOUNG

THE CONDOR A MAGAZINE OF WESTERN ORNITHOLOGY.



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Two Oregon Warblers

BY WILLIAM L. FINLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMAN T. BOHLMAN

DURING the warm days of May when the mystery of life seems suddenly unveiled in a miraculous manner, I often frequent a woody retreat above the old mill dam on Fulton creek. A clump of firs and maples overhang where the limpid water whirls gurgling among the gray rocks. Star flowers gleam from the darker places of shade, white anemones are scattered among grass blades and ferns, and Linnæan bells overhang the moss-covered logs. This is the haunt of the black-throated gray warbler.^a

Just below the brow of the hill half a mile above the creek, a little spring bubbles out of an alder copse. Instead of trickling down the hillside like an ordinary streamlet, the water scatters and seeps into the spongy soil. This forms a wet place an acre or so in extent over which has grown a rich growth of swamp grass. This is the yellow-throat's^b home. I call it the "Witch's Garden."

I have a great admiration for the little feathered individual dressed in gray because his extreme shyness is a good indication of his finer nature. But there is a fascination about lying in the shade of the tall fir and listening to the fanciful call of yellow-throat. You may hear him and his mate almost any time of the day calling "Witch-et-y! Witch-et-y! Witch-et-y!" Yes, you may hear him but seldom see him.

What a little deceiver this golden sprite is! Looking for his nest is something like searching for the bags of gold at the rain-bow's tip. Among the feathered falsifiers this bird is certainly a leader. If you plod through the grass looking for

^a *Dendroica nigrescens*.

^b *Geothlypis trichas arizela*.

his straw basket of eggs, he'll call "Here it is! Here it is!" and a minute later he'll screech the same lie from another tussock ten yards away.

Why Nature put that jet black mask across his countenance is more than I can guess, unless it was to enable him to sing his falsehoods without a blush. His wife must be a model for she goes about gossiping without the sign of a veil. It's the Turkish custom reversed.

I never know just when yellow-throat is going to depart in the fall or just when he will return in the spring. I have never seen him going away or coming back. You may hear him one day and find your garden tenantless the following. Then, after a long silence, you wake up some morning and find he's there again, as if he had grown out of the ground during the night, like a toad-stool. After his return in the spring it's never long before he is scratching out a pit in a dry grass-bunch to line with bark strips and shreds.

No, for all my trouble I didn't find the nest and eggs, though I besieged the swampy patch a



FEMALE YELLOW-THROAT

dozen times. But one day as I skirted the edge of the garden, a streak of yellow darted from under my feet. She was brooding a basket of naked nestlings. Then I laid seige, not too close at first. I trained my camera on the most advantageous perches about the vicinity. I narrowed in day by day. The warblers soon grew accustomed to the click of the shutter. Then I leveled my Long-focus squarely on the nest.

Bird families are like human families in many ways. Sometimes a husband is as thoughtful about household duties as the wife, in other cases he rarely if ever assists in the care of the children. It is generally far more difficult to photograph a male bird than a female. Yellow-throat was a pleasing exception. He worked side by side with his wife and never feared or faltered for an instant.

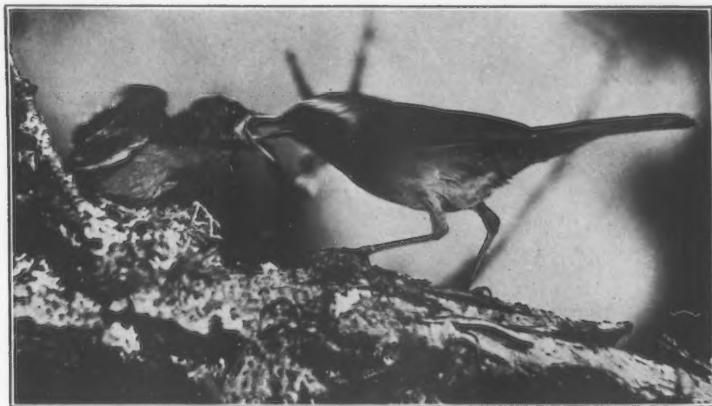
This was not the case in the black-throated gray warbler family. The pater familias seemed unavoidably detained away from home on matters of business or social importance most of the day when the children were crying for food. The wife took entire charge of feeding and caring for the nestlings. Only the male has the jet black throat, which is a distinctive mark of the species. The female wears a white cravat. But, to my notion, she is a deal more important in warbler affairs than her more highly marked mate.

Fortunately, just at the side of the fir sapling, in which we found the gray warbler's nest, was the sawed-off stump of a large tree. Upon this we could climb

and look into the nest. When I first parted the branches and looked into the feather-lined cup, two small nestlings stretched their skinny necks and opened their mouths with unmistakable signs of hunger.

The moment the mother returned and found me at the nest she was scared almost out of her senses. She fell from the top of the tree in a fluttering fit. She caught quivering on the limb a foot from my hand. But unable to hold on, she slipped through the branches and clutched my shoe. I never saw such an exaggerated case of the chills. I stooped to see what ailed her. She wavered like an autumn leaf to the ground. I leaped down, but she had limped under a bush and suddenly got well. Of course I knew she was tricking me! But I never saw higher skill in a feathered artist.

The next day my heart was hardened against all her alluring wiles and crocodile tears. She played her best, but the minute she failed to win, I got a furious berating. It was no begging note now. She perched over my head and called me every name in the warbler vocabulary. When she saw I was shoving the one-



MALE YELLOW-THROAT FEEDING YOUNG

eyed monster right at her children, she screamed "Fly! Fly! for your lives." Both the scanty-feathered, bob-tailed youngsters jumped blindly out of the nest into the bushes below. She outdid all previous performances. But not to be fooled, I kept an eye on one nestling and soon replaced him in the nest where he belonged. I looked for half an hour and then found the second dumpy little fellow sitting right before my eyes. Nature always hides such creatures from me by an almost invisible veil of mystery. I've seen a flock of half a dozen grouse flutter up into a fir and disappear to my eyes as completely as a cloud of fog before the sun.

It was easy enough to get pictures of the nest and young, but a very different matter to get the parents within shot of the camera. After frequent visits, however, the gray mother seemed to recognize the camera as harmless. This took time and an unlimited amount of patience, but it gave the best opportunities of studying the bird's habits.

The first day I really met the gray gentleman face to face was when I was trying to get a photograph of the mother as she came home to feed. She had

gotten quite used to the camera. I had the instrument leveled point blank at the nest only a yard distant. A gray figure came flitting over the tree top and planted himself on the limb right beside the home. He carried a green cut-worm in his mouth. No sooner had he squatted on his accustomed perch than he caught sight of the cyclops. With an astonished chirp, he dropped his worm, threw a back somerset, and all I saw was a meteor-like streak of gray curving up over the pointed firs. I doubt if he felt any degree of safety till he got across the Willamette,



MALE YELLOW-THROAT AND YOUNG

for he didn't get up courage enough to even enquire about the children the rest of that day.

I didn't think his lordship figured in home affairs at all, but I must have been mistaken. The next day the mother again tried to lure me from the nest. Just as she was putting on a few extra agonizing touches, I saw a glint of gray. The father pounced upon his feigning spouse. I never witnessed such a case of wife beating. I'm not an expert on bird ethics but such a performance would be some-

what scandalous among my own neighbors. Maybe he blamed his wife for my interference or he may have been tired of her fooling, at any rate she quit her deceiving antics and soon led her children off through the bushes.

Berkeley, Cal.



FEMALE BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER FEEDING YOUNG

Nesting Habits of the Black-headed Grosbeak

BY ANNA HEAD

DOES the same pair of birds return to their old nesting-site? This is a question difficult to determine, as, from the nature of things positive evidence is almost impossible to secure. In some cases a ring has been fastened about the leg of one of a pair, and so it has been proven that he returned several years in succession to the same locality. But from slight indications pointing in the same direction, even though no positive proof is forthcoming, I am inclined to think this is commoner than usually supposed. The evidence which has convinced me may not be so cogent to another as to myself. It depends chiefly upon individual traits of character and of song observed for two successive years in a small valley in Mendocino county. The bird to which I paid most attention was the black-headed grosbeak (*Zamelodia melanocephala*), and at the end of the first summer I felt personally acquainted with several pairs.

In one pair the female was brave and did a large part of the feeding, brooding the birds willingly in my presence, while the male circled about and sang incessantly. This pair chose a damp willow thicket, the home of the chat, for their nest, and placed it rather high on a swaying twig of willow, stayed by two crossing blackberry vines. I had the pleasure of watching the whole course of rearing the young, and saw where they were led off to the right along the edge of the swamp, while still totally destitute of tails and very downy about the head. This I consider a rather unusual nesting site, as the grosbeak seems to prefer dry hillsides and manzanita, madrone, or hazel bushes. So when the second year I found

a nest, also placed high in a clump of willow and blooming elder, within three yards of the first, the presumption in my mind was strong that it was built by the same pair. When the mother proved to be a brave bird, and stood my gaze steadily, and when, as last year, this brood was the first to leave the nest, and took the same course through the bushes, my conviction amounted to certainty. Another pair last year had chosen a hazel bush overhanging a little path leading to the spring. Of these I wrote in my notebook that they were very wild and that the female refused to go on the nest as long as I was in sight, although I went to a distance and kept very quiet. Her mate went on at last, but he, too, was a timid bird. This year the same nest was in place, for slight and apparently carelessly built as they are, they will outlast many a more elaborate nest, and endure the storms of winter remarkably well. In the very next bush, and at about the same height was another nest, with a pair whose actions were exactly like these of last year. When I looked at the nest, although I did not touch it, the female raised such an outcry that she drew about her a pair of tanagers, a handsome male spurred towhee, a pair of Macgillivray warblers, and a Cassin vireo, who had a great deal of advice to offer in his loud, preaching tones. The male grosbeak satisfied himself with taking up a post of observation on a high twig, and driving away another male, whose sympathy was evidently offensive to the husband. I have noticed that each pair regarded as their private property a circle of perhaps a hundred yards about their nest, and resented the appearance in that ground of any of their own race. They were never far enough away from another nest—however, to be out of ear-shot, and one male seemed to vie with another in musical display, at leisure moments.

Another pair had managed to conceal their nest from me last year, but I knew its whereabouts in the thick woods, and had noted the song as having a peculiar refrain of four descending notes. This year I traced the male by this song, and happened to sit down at the very foot of a young madrone in which the nest was placed. I found this pair most engaging and fearless, and although the young were nearly fledged, I felt repaid for the time that I gave to watching them. I found that the male was much the bolder bird, although the female, after starting back several times at sight of me, overcame her fear and delivered the mouthful of green caterpillars which she was carrying. I found that they fed in perfectly regular rotation, at intervals of about twelve minutes, and that the one bird remained on guard while the other was seeking food. They spent this time differently, however. The male always took up a position on a tree near by and sang till his wife returned. Once after a prolonged absence, he grew silent and anxious, and finally went off to look for her. When she was left in charge, she either sat silently in the same tree or on the edge of the nest, seeming to have a soothing effect on the young, who slept as long as she was there. She would not stir and waken them for any movement of mine. The different influence of the two parents was marked. When the father was heard returning with his loud, cheery song, which did not seem to be interfered with by his big mouthful of wriggling worms, every youngster was alert and standing on tiptoe to get first taste. The father always brought more food than the mother, and the fledglings seemed inspired by his bustling ways to be adventurous. One stretched his wings and crawled up to the edge of the frail nest, and I could see that it would not be long before he would fly. Only the father attended to the cleansing of the nest as long as I watched them. The father's singing so constantly near the nest, combined with his generous feeding, would certainly make an impression on the

memories of the young birds, and help to mould their song when they come to maturity. They noticed the father's song every time before he came in sight.

The male grosbeak is certainly most devoted and cheerful about his domestic duties. He sings to his mate all through the period of incubation, sings while feeding the young and during the anxious time of their first flights, and I have even seen him sitting upon the eggs and singing merrily.

Another reason why I think that the same pair returns to the same nesting site in successive years is that in several cases I have found nests of different years in the same small tree. In one manzanita bush, about ten feet high, were three nests, one almost fallen to pieces, one of last year, and a fresh nest with a bird on it. It may be argued that a second bird chose the site because it was eminently suitable; but where there are so many shrubs all alike, I do not think one can be considered more suitable than another. A more likely suggestion is that the young birds might return another year to the neighborhood of the nest in which they were reared. Further observations on the plumage of the birds would settle this point as it takes several years for a male grosbeak to attain his full beauty of plumage.

Destruction of Birds by Wires

BY W. OTTO EMERSON

IF one does not happen to live where he can observe the disastrous effect upon bird life of numerous telephone, telegraph and electric power wires, which are strung along our highways, across lines of migration or favorite paths to feeding grounds, he would be surprised at the number of our shore birds destroyed annually. Within the past few years several instances have come under my observation which seem worthy of record.

The first case was noted September 8, 1898, in connection with the telephone line which, passing over the salt marshes, joins Haywards with a landing on the bay shore, some four miles west. Only two wires are used, which are attached to fourteen foot poles set some twenty feet out in the Salicornia to the right of the roadway. Beyond this, on both sides of the road, the marshes are cut up for miles into a series of checker-board ponds for salt water evaporating purposes. In August, September and October these ponds are a mass of glittering white—more or less as the water has been run off. Small shore waders come by the thousands to feed upon the mass of larvæ which collect about the edges of the ponds. On the date mentioned I drove over the road for the first time to find what fall migrants had returned. On picking up eight or ten dead sandpipers from the road, I was at first unable to make out what had killed them. I then noticed a fluttering bird out in the marsh in line of the phone wires, and found it to be a phalarope with a broken wing. This revealed the secret. I soon observed a flock go by from one pond to another but saw none of them strike the wire that trip, but later saw several individuals knocked out of a flock of sandpipers. I picked up forty dead birds that lay along the road and about the marsh. Some were under the wires while others would be flung off ten or twenty feet by the impact of hitting a

wire, in rapid flight. A little farther on I found a bird hanging by the wing and another by the neck to the wire. Most of those picked up were found to be cut across the front of the head or breast. Some were cut into the flesh deeply; a few were beheaded.

I made the next day another trip over the road and found the remains of thirty odd birds mostly *Phalaropus lobatus* and *Ereunetes occidentalis*. Quite a number of *Tringa pacifica* and *T. minutilla* were among those found on my first visit.

As I watched the flocks when they came in from the bay, or flew from one set of ponds to another, it was observed that their line of flight would just be in range to hit either of the two wires. Coming with such a zig-zag and rapid flight they were not able to see the two wires in time to dip or rise in order to avoid being caught by the trap. If one of the foremost birds of the flock struck the wire and fell, the rest would turn their course somewhat; more from seeing their falling companion, I think, than from being able to distinguish at the speed they were going, the real cause of the disaster.

On my last visit in this direction, May 11, 1903, I found five *Phalaropus lobatus* in full spring plumage, several *Tringa minutilla*, *T. pacifica*, and *Ereunetes occidentalis*. Larger birds than these would not be so liable to come in contact with the wires, flying as they do considerably slower and higher in the air.

This destruction of shore birds goes on night and day the year round. I asked some of the salt-pond owners if they noticed birds flying against the wires. They said some mornings after the spring or fall flights, they had seen dozens lying along the road. Cats from warehouses and dwellings had learned the convenient larder and had grown fat, while Japanese and Italian workmen imitated the cats.

Mr. F. H. Hollins of San José mentioned to me some years ago that he had picked up two or three dozen phalaropes one morning (Nov. 1898) along the main thoroughfare, five miles east of the salt marsh. They lay under the wires and he thought they must have been killed during the night flight.

Mr. Clark P. Streater picked up on the main business street of Santa Cruz, California, in September, 1903, a black rail, *Porzana jamaicensis*, killed by overhead wires.

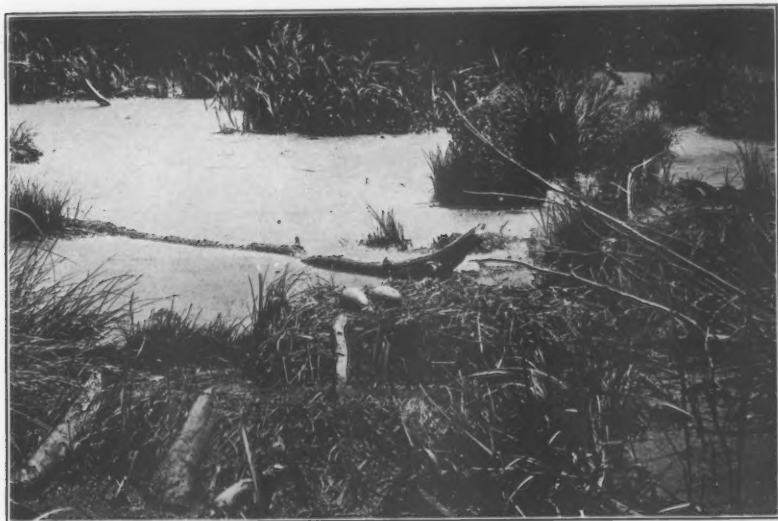
On June 29, 1903, Prof. F. E. L. Beal and myself found one of the oddest tangles into which a bird ever managed to get itself. It was a great horned owl, on one of the canyon ranches, and was wound up in a barbed wire fence. He was hanging by the wing, wound several times around the wires, so that it was impossible to extricate him. The fence had only two wires, and led down a slope into the upper end of a gully or canyon. Some of the sandy hill had slid down leaving the wire with several posts swinging free, some six or eight feet in air, for a distance of several hundred yards. No doubt the owl, intent upon some prospective midnight lunch, as he flew along down the gulch, came in contact with the top wire. This, having caught his fluffy feathers, naturally wound Bubo tight in its barbs. The legs were badly cut by the struggle for freedom which was further evidenced by the feathers about the neck. He had evidently used his beak as well as feet. In this age of barbed wire there are more ways than one by which an animal may come to an untimely end.

A Sandhill Crane's Nest

BY EDWARD R. WARREN

WITH A PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

IN the western part of Gunnison county, Colorado, between the slope of Ragged mountain and Muddy creek, is a high, rolling plateau, of an elevation of 8000 feet or more. In amongst the hollows of this plateau are many little lakes or ponds, varying in size from fifty to sixty feet in diameter to a hundred yards or more. During the past three seasons I have been about this country very much, surveying, and every season have seen sandhill cranes (*Grus mexicana*) flying overhead and heard their melodious ? notes, but did not find a nest until June 5, 1903, when, while chopping out a line across the top of a little knoll just south of a small pond, my assistant disturbed a crane. This kept flying about and croak-



NEST OF SANDHILL CRANE, GUNNISON COUNTY, COLORADO

ing so anxiously as to make him think there was a nest there, and going to see he found it, with two eggs. When I came along he showed it to me.

Out about twenty feet from the shore, was the nest, on a bare space among some tussocks of grass which lay more or less in a line. The water was not very deep but the mud was and I could not get to the nest as there was nothing of which to make a bridge, so I had to content myself with a careful examination from the shore.

The nest was irregular in shape, about two feet across and made of dead marsh grass. On this platform, such as it was practically, lay the two large eggs, looking, my man said, something like turkey eggs. They were rather a light brownish green, spotted and blotched all over with light reddish brown, the spots being thickest and largest on the large end of the egg, though there did not appear to be any great difference in the size of the ends.

The lake was about one hundred by one hundred and twenty-five feet, lying in a hollow, all surrounded by the hills and its shores thickly covered with alders and small aspens, one tall charred spruce stump standing on the shore near the nest.

I made up my mind when I saw the nest what my next Sunday's work would be, and when Sunday, the 7th came, I went to the spot with the camera and took several photographs from different points of view. As I was going through the brush around the shore of the lake the bird flew off, and all the time I was there kept flying about overhead, often accompanied by her mate. After I finished there I visited a number of other lakes and saw two more cranes but found no nest.

A few ducks also nest about some of these ponds though not so many as in past years. Large game was formerly very abundant here but has mostly been killed off or driven away and the birds are also much scarcer.

Colorado Springs, Colo.

Midwinter Birds at Palm Springs, California

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL

THE small village called Palm Springs lies in Riverside county, California, about seven miles south of the Southern Pacific station of the same name. It is situated on the floor of the extreme western arm of the Colorado desert. This arm terminates on San Geronio Pass which separates the lofty San Bernardino range on the north from the precipitous San Jacinto mountains on the south. Palm Springs itself is close to the abrupt base of San Jacinto peak, and is at about four hundred feet elevation. But the desert sinks away gradually to the southeastward until in places it is two hundred and fifty feet below sea-level.

The plant-life of this belt is startling to a novice in its strangely adapted desert forms. In the vicinity of Palm Springs the desert floor is more or less closely dotted with several peculiar species of cacti, the creosote bush, screw-bean, mesquite and various *Daleas*, one of which is called locally the smoke-bush, from the filmy bluish aspect presented by a thicket of it at a distance. At the mouths of canyons and in the desert in the vicinity of springs, grow clumps of giant palms, which give a tropical air to the landscape. Cottonwoods flourish wherever there is sufficient underground water supply. The remains of numerous small annuals attest to occasional rains which, though rare, result in a luxuriant but brief-lived additional vegetation. These leave a crop of seeds to be garnered in the rest of the year by the remarkably numerous kangaroo rats, as well as by various birds, and granivorous insects such as ants.

From all accounts the summer temperature of this region must be well nigh unbearable. We were told that the town of Palm Springs is deserted during the summer months by everyone but Indians. But the winter climate is truly delightful—the days and nights perfectly clear, a little warm for comfortable tramping in the middle of the day, but cool and pleasant the rest of the time. The excessive dryness of the atmosphere is a bit disagreeable, resulting in chapped hands, and thus increasing the danger of arsenic-poisoning if one happens to be preparing specimens continuously.

Mr. Joseph Maillard and myself were recently fortunate enough to participate

in a collecting trip into this interesting locality. Nine days were industriously occupied, from December 25 to January 2, inclusive, and a gratifying array of specimens and information proved the success of the undertaking. We made our headquarters at the winter resort or "hotel," which consists of numerous cottages hidden away within a fine old orange orchard. During our stay we were joined for a few days by two other Cooper Club members. Mr. French Gilman of Banning, who knows this region thoroughly, assisted us greatly in learning the whereabouts of things. And Prof. Kellogg of Stanford found *Mallophaga* of interest on certain of our mammals as well as birds. Mr. George Maxwell, a very companionable gentleman from Portland, Oregon, also proffered his aid whenever opportunity offered.

Except in certain small areas birds were exceedingly scarce. In some parts of the desert quite a number of individuals of the forms that appear to live without water were to be found; while in other and apparently similar portions all species were conspicuous only by their absence. Around the little village many varieties were present in numbers; and yet at some of the abandoned farms and orchards within a mile or so of it, and where there were well-filled irrigating ditches, trees and shrubbery—apparently ideal spots for bird life—there were almost no feathered inhabitants, except perhaps a few Audubon warblers or kinglets. The favorite locality for most species was within a semicircle made by the "big ditch," flowing at this season, where mesquites and other bushes attained almost the dignity of trees. This spot was the feeding ground of a combined flock of desert and valley quail, containing sixty or eighty individuals. These birds were extremely wild, made so by the constant persecution of the Indians and whites living at Palm Springs nearby, and would scatter in every direction when disturbed, running with remarkable speed, occasionally flying and in any case seeking shelter on the steep, rocky mountain side adjacent, where it was useless to try to follow them.

The following list is intended to give any person who may contemplate a visit to Palm Springs an idea of what to expect in the bird line in the winter season. Mr. Gilman told us that later, during the spring months great numbers of migrants were in evidence. It is suggested that this place, or any other up toward San Geronio Pass, would make an ideal station for making observations on migrating land birds, on account of the peculiar topography probably one of the best in California.

In preparing the present paper I hereby acknowledge the cordial assistance of Mr. Joseph Mailliard, whose observations are incorporated along with my own.

— *Lophortyx gambeli*. Desert Quail. *Lophortyx c. vallicolus*. Valley Quail. Numerous in the vicinity of water, as along irrigating ditches and in canyons. The desert or Gambel quail was apparently the commonest species; though the two were often found together so that it was difficult to judge of their comparative abundance. Their notes and flight differed to some extent, and Mr. Mailliard contributes the following remarks in this regard. "The notes of the desert quail differ from those of the valley quail in variety, and to a certain extent in character, though they have some notes in common. The 'crow' of the latter consists of three notes, varying in length and accent according to the call given, in one case the last note being a falling one. The 'crow' of the desert quail, while rather similar to the other, has two additional notes at the end, rendered in a softer tone. Besides the alarm calls the valley quail has a few twittering or conversational notes, while the other species has a lot of these, quite varied and often given in a

way that seems remarkably loud to one accustomed only to the notes of the former. Another peculiarity of the desert quail is the queer sound that it makes as it rises from the ground on being surprised into flight—the sort of screeching cackle, on a small scale, that a hen makes when frightened from her nest.”

— *Accipiter v. rufilatus*. Western Sharp-shin. Mr. Mailliard saw one quietly flitting along some pepper trees near the Springs, doubtless on the lookout for robins.

Accipiter cooperi. Cooper Hawk. Single individuals were several times seen flying along the base of the mountain. Their approach was usually announced by the excited chirping of a scattering flock of linnets, which, however, kept at a respectful distance in the rear.

Buteo b. calurus. Western Red-tail. Two or more roosted regularly in some tall cottonwoods near the Springs, being generally seen as they were arriving at night. Mr. Gilman showed us a nest, from which he had secured eggs many years ago, built in a cranny on the face of a cliff at the mouth of Andreas canyon.

Bubo v. pacificus. Pacific Horned Owl. Heard nightly about the Springs, especially just at daybreak. Prof. Kellogg flushed one from among some boulders on the mountain side back of town.

Geococcyx californianus. Roadrunner. Fairly common.

— *Dryobates p. turati*. Willow Woodpecker. Mr. Mailliard found a bird of this species in Andreas Canyon, and was also sure of the identity of one seen near the Springs. The willow woodpecker is doubtless only a winter visitant from the westward.

— *Dryobates s. bairdi*. Texas Woodpecker. Several were seen and one secured out on the deserts southeast of the Springs. They were shy and led a hot chase, flying long stretches to alight but a minute or so on some cactus. An individual of this species was found in Palm Canyon working on a palm trunk; another was almost daily seen in the cottonwoods close to the hotel.

— *Sphyrapicus r. daggetti*. Sierra Sapsucker. Mr. Mailliard secured a typical example of this bird. The characteristic borings of sapsuckers were to be seen abundantly on pepper trees about town.

Colaptes c. collaris. Red-shafted Flicker. Common about the Springs and in Palm Canyon. Mr. Mailliard secured an interesting “hybrid,” with the under surface of wings and tail yellow and malar patches red.

+ *Calypte anna*. Anna Hummingbird. A number were noted at the canyon mouths and about the Springs.

+ *Calypte costæ*. Costa Hummingbird. Two males in full plumage were taken and others seen. They were feeding about a red-flowered desert shrub.

+ *Trochilus alexandri*. Black-chinned Hummingbird. One was taken and several others seen. I was not previously aware that either the black-chin or Costa hummer remained throughout the winter in any part of California.

Sayornis saya. Say Phoebe. Fairly common. But as usual in winter seen only solitarily, mostly on the plains.

Sayornis nigricans. Black Phoebe. Several noted in Palm Canyon, and one at the Springs.

Carpodacus m. frontalis. House Finch. Abundant everywhere, especially in the vicinity of water; many old nests in palms.

Astragalinus psaltria. Arkansas Goldfinch. Often seen about the Springs, and in brush along the ditches out on the desert.

Chondestes g. strigatus. Western Lark Sparrow. One small flock and three individuals were encountered close about the Springs.

Zonotrichia l. gambeli. Intermediate Sparrow. A few were met with in

brush out on the desert. Every night quite a number came into the orange trees about the hotel to roost.

Spizella s. arizonæ. Western Chipping Sparrow. The only individual detected was taken by Mr. Mailliard near the Springs.

Amphispiza b. deserticola. Desert Black-throated Sparrow. Common on the desert and up the lower slopes of the mountain, occurring in scattering flocks of from six to twenty or more. These companies were usually in motion and hard to follow, as the birds had a way of flying off one at a time in rapid succession, retreating over a hill or behind thickets; so that the whole flock seemed to vanish. It was only by singling out one particular bird and firing the instant an opportunity offered that we were able to secure many specimens.

Amphispiza nevadensis. Sage Sparrow. Fairly common in the desert; met with either singly, or but a few together feeding on the ground beneath bushes, and when pursued flying from one bush-top to another.

Melospiza c. cooperi. San Diego Song Sparrow. Two specimens, doubtfully referred to this subspecies, were obtained along the willow stream in Palm Canyon.

Pipilo c. senicula. Anthony Towhee. Two were secured along the main ditch near the Springs.

Pipilo aberti. Abert Towhee. Seen only in the immediate vicinity of the Springs, where the birds in pairs hopped familiarly among shrubbery. Mr. Mailliard found several on the hillside just back of town. As already recorded (CONDOR V, p. 12), Mr. Gilman has found the species breeding here and on the Colorado Desert to the eastward. Palm Springs is doubtless its westernmost station.

Phainopepla nitens. Phainopepla. Quite common in mesquite patches feeding on mistletoe berries.

Lanius l. excubitorides. White-rumped Shrike. Evenly distributed wherever we went, but not numerous. One was discovered in the orange orchard near the hotel industriously battering a linnnet. The squalls of its victim quickly attracted a sympathetic crowd of onlookers which commented vociferously. After what seemed considerable time the linnnet broke loose and escaped into a bush, panting but apparently little the worse for wear. A sample of the butcher-bird's work was found in the shape of a kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami simiolus*) which was skilfully wedged between forking twigs of a smoke-bush. The subspecies to which our Palm Springs shrikes should be referred is doubtful. They present characters distinct from those of both typical *gambeli*, and *excubitorides* as occurring in Arizona. It is high time that some one thoroughly equipped worked up the western forms of *Lanius* of which there are several well-marked races as yet undescribed.

Dendroica auduboni. Audubon Warbler. This species, so widely distributed in winter, was present in usual numbers in the cottonwoods about the Springs.

Anthus pensilvanicus. American Pipit. One was seen in company with blue-birds on an irrigated field close to the Springs.

Oroscoptes montanus. Sage Thrasher. One specimen was secured and a few others seen in creosote brush southeast of the Springs. At a moderate distance this bird bears a remarkable resemblance to the cactus wren in behavior and general appearance. At least I am sure I confused the two repeatedly unless very close to hand.

Mimus p. leucopterus. Western Mockingbird. One individual was often seen about the hotel, and one or two others were found in Palm Canyon.

+ *Toxostoma lecontei*. Leconte Thrasher. This wary bird we found to fully warrant the many stories we had heard of its extreme shyness. Mr. Gilman, who has probably had as much experience with Leconte thrashers as any one, showed us where to find them, and how to secure specimens by running them down. The latter procedure I found rather discouraging myself, for I failed to get a single bird. But it was like watching a mimic battle to see Mr. Gilman charging across the country, dodging cactus clumps or jumping clear of them, as he could, every now and then halting abruptly to aim and fire. His success proved the correctness of his methods.

+ *Toxostoma crissale*. Crissal Thrasher. Mr. Mailliard secured one specimen and saw another among the mesquites along the big ditch south of Palm Springs. In this same locality Mr. Gilman has found the species nesting. (CONDOR IV, p. 15.) This marks the westernmost limit of the bird's range.

- *Heleodytes b. couesi*. Cactus Wren. Fairly common out on the desert; and also, as surprised me when I first found them, in Palm Canyon. In the latter locality they made themselves at home among the drooping dead leaves beneath the green heads of the lofty palms. The birds could be plainly heard rattling about inside, but were difficult to drive out. Doubtless such palm-leaf bowers afforded insect food in plenty, as well as a well-protected retreat. The San Diego and canyon wrens had taken similar advantage of the palms. The specimens of the cactus wren secured, when compared with numerous other skins from Arizona and the San Diego district present no tangible differences. A fairly careful study of my material points towards the correctness of Mr. Swarth's conclusions (CONDOR VI, p. 17) in regard to the absolute uniformity of the race as occurring in the southwestern states.

Salpinctes obsoletus. Rock Wren. Uniformly common on the boulder-strewn mountain sides as well as among mammal burrows out on the level desert.

- *Catherpes m. punctulatus*. Dotted Canyon Wren. This unique songster was numerous about and within the buildings at Palm Springs. In the morning before it was really bright daylight we were often aroused by these birds scratching about on the roof, sometimes coming into our rooms through spaces under the eaves. In fact Mr. Mailliard chased one under the bed. But the birds refused to be cornered, for they were evidently familiar with every exit. Their hoarse notes resounded lonesomely through the house; and now and then burst forth the beautifully-modulated, descending series of notes which never fails to thrill one with delight. Aside from the immediate neighborhood of the Springs, we found the canyon wren only in Palm Canyon, where many were detected as they dodged in and out of crevices between huge granite slabs, or scurried about within the reversed tussocks of palm leaves.

- *Thryomanes b. charienturus*. San Diego Wren. Very numerous in Palm Canyon; also fairly common in the mesquite brush along the big ditch. This form is here probably only a winter visitant from the San Jacinto region a short distance to the westward.

- *Thryomanes b. eremophilus*. Desert Bewick Wren. I secured a single bird, clearly referable to this form, on the desert four miles southeast of Palm Springs, December 30. It was a female in unworn plumage, and differed markedly from the San Diego wren. In fact when I first saw the bird I mistook it for a rock wren; for it was skipping from weed to weed and alighting on the ground much after the fashion of the last named bird. Its pale coloration and large size readily distinguish it from the San Diego wren. This was probably a winter visitant

from the eastward, for the skin seems identical in every respect with others from the Huachuca mountains, Arizona.

Psaltriparus minimus. California Bush-tit. Small scattering flocks were frequently seen in the pepper trees and cottonwoods close around the Springs.

Auriparus flaviceps. Verdin. A common bird, from a desert standpoint. Mr. Gilman has described its nesting in this vicinity elsewhere (CONDOR IV, 88).

Regulus c. cineraceus. Ashy Kinglet. Fairly common in the trees about the Springs, and also in brush along the ditches to the eastward.

Poliophtila c. obscura. Western Gnatcatcher. Several were seen, and one shot for identification, close about the Springs. They were generally in the company of bush-tits.

Poliophtila plumbea. Plumbeous Gnatcatcher. A common species, being found in pairs, or sometimes half-a-dozen within a few yards' radius, in mesquites, or any other sort of desert brush for that matter. The call-notes of this species are quite different from those of either of the others, but defy intelligible description. Mr. Gilman told me this species occurs to the westward about fifteen miles, beyond which he has not seen it. The black-tailed gnatcatcher is common at Banning and a few miles to the eastward. But he has never found the two species intermingling. There is apparently a hiatus of several miles left between their ranges where neither have been seen except for the single straggler recorded beyond.

Poliophtila californica. Black-tailed Gnatcatcher. I secured a lone specimen, a female, on January first, two miles east of Palm Springs. I heard and recognized its call, and singled it out from among a scattered band of the plumbeous. The black-tail was being set upon and vindictively harried by a pair of plumbeous, which very plainly indeed resented its intrusion upon their domain. This bird was doubtless a straggler from the direction of Banning.

Hylocichla g. nana. Dwarf Hermit Thrush. Several observed in canyons along streams which make down from San Jacinto Peak.

Merula m. propinqua. Western Robin. A few, perhaps a dozen in all, were constantly present in the pepper trees about the Springs.

Sialia m. occidentalis. Western Bluebird. Found in flocks frequenting mesquite tracts where they were feeding on mistletoe berries. In Palm Canyon great numbers were in evidence among the giant palms. A dozen or more would be seen clinging to each pendant cluster of dates obviously attracted by the fruity outside pulp. While thus feeding upon the fruit of the palms, the noise made by the seeds dropping into the dry brush at the bases of the lofty trees was so great as to give the impression, before the true cause was discovered, that some large animal was trampling through the undergrowth.

Sialia arctica. Mountain Bluebird. Mr. Mailliard saw four near Palm Springs and secured two.

The Elf Owl in California

BY HERBERT BROWN

WITH the possible exception of rare stragglers I am of the belief that the Colorado river marks the western boundary line of the habitat of the elf owl (*Micropallas whitneyi*.) I have reasons to think that this statement will hold good. In Arizona, during the nesting season, the natural home of the

elf owl is in the deserted woodpecker holes common to saguara or giant cactus of the desert region of the country. Strangely enough this plant (*Cereus giganteus*) also finds its western line of demarkation in the same stream. To the general observer the characteristics of the country, on either side of the river, are identical, but conditions, evidently, are different. On the Arizona side the saguara is widely distributed and is, frequently, of great growth, but in California it occurs only as stragglers in an unresponsive land. To locate the elf owl in California it became necessary to locate this cactus there also. For a time the location of one promised as many difficulties as the other. In reply to numerous inquiries, verbally and by letter, I learned that a few straggling specimens of the saguara were to be found in the Duncan Flats, or as it is known to some people, the Senator Mine Basin, between twenty and twenty-five miles north of here, on the California side of the river, and that others were to be found opposite Ehrenberg, also west of the river, about one hundred miles further north. So far as I now know there are none in the intermediate country.

Hereabouts the nesting season of *Micropallas whitneyi* may be said to commence about the end of the first week in May, and to continue at intervals throughout the month. Knowing this I had arranged to examine the cactus on the Duncan Flats on or about May tenth, (1903), but was delayed till the seventeenth. At that time the Colorado river was over-running its banks and travel was both difficult and dangerous, the intersecting sloughs being full of water and their bottoms slippery and uncertain. All told there are probably a dozen saguaras in the flats, and they are scattered over a radius of several miles. The large ones contained numerous woodpecker holes and because of their apparently worn exterior had the appearance of being occupied. The first one examined stood at the intersection of several small gulches; it was set with numerous arms, all woodpecker bored, and offered an ideal nesting place for numerous small owls, but to my surprise, the only life it contained was a nest of gilded woodpeckers (*Colaptes chrysoides*.) Although I cut into and carefully examined every promising hole I did not find even a feather of the bird I was looking for. Because of my long familiarity with this owl and its ways I generally know where to expect it, but here the best of indications went for nothing. Such a tree in southern central Arizona would have been richness itself. Although I examined everything in that direction I found nothing till I reached the last cactus in the upper end of the Basin. In this one, at an elevation of about twenty feet, I found four partially incubated eggs of an elf owl. They were black and apparently cold. From a hole on the other side of the cactus an owl flew to the opposite bank of the wash in which the cactus was standing, gave one of the characteristic cries, then flew to a bush further up the gulch where it was taken. It proved to be a nesting female and was, undoubtedly, the mother of the four eggs. This was my first find of the bird and its eggs in California. In the topmost hole of the same cactus I found five eggs of a sparrow hawk. They were partially incubated but not sufficiently so as to injure them. In another cactus some three hundred yards north and in the same wash, I found a second nest of the elf owl. It also contained four partially incubated eggs, and, in this case, the female was on the nest. High up in the same cactus, was the nest of a woodpecker. The young in it were very noisy. I did not see the parent birds and did not interfere with them. In still another cactus I came across a Mexican screech owl (*M. a. cineraceus*.) and four young ones. The latter were about ten days old. A nest of Gila woodpeckers (*Melanerpes uropygialis*) completed my day's work in the field, but not in getting home. I could not find a male owl although I looked high and low for them.

That the elf owl is a resident of California is now settled beyond doubt, but I seriously question their being far west of the Colorado river. On the Arizona side, immediately opposite Duncan Flate, is an extensive growth of saguaras, and in them scores of favorable nesting sites. These conditions in southern central Arizona would produce at least twenty to one on the Colorado. I am not very familiar with the desert flora west of the river, although I crossed the country twice, once by stage and once by horseback, but that was so long ago that I may be pardoned for forgetting. I do know, however, that the upper reaches of the desert have a heavier growth than the middle lower. Furthermore its character is such that if the elf owl goes far west of the Colorado river it must be by way of the Mojave desert and not by way of the Colorado. As Mr. Frank Stephens is better informed on that subject than I am, I pass the question up to him.

The two elf owl skins I sent to the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, but the eggs I still have, two beautiful sets of four each. Even the five hawk eggs turned out first class. The family of Mexican screech owls I brought home with me. I kept them for two months and then sent them to Central Park, New York. As they were the first lot of young, of their kind, ever taken in California I offered them to the Park Commissioners, San Francisco, but they declined the proffered gift with thanks. The mother, of course, went with them. They certainly were a beautiful lot if such expression can be used to describe a family of owls.

Yuma, Arizona.

Nevada Notes

BY WILSON C. HANNA

DURING the late spring and early summer months of last year (1903) work on the Central Pacific Reconstruction brought me to that part of Humboldt county, Nevada, lying between Golconda and Battle Mountain. This division of the railroad lies in the valley of the Humboldt River, which here varies in width from a few hundred yards to many miles; while the river itself containing a good volume of water flows slowly through its very winding channel, in some places dividing into several branches. This condition of the river causes many shallow alkaline ponds and a considerable amount of marshy meadow land which in most places is covered with coarse wild grasses.

The valley is bounded by rocky mountains, the height of which varies from several hundred to several thousand feet above the floor of the valley. Upon the highest of these snow lies during most of the year. Their sides are sparsely covered with low chaparral. The soil is more or less alkaline which is probably the cause of the absence of trees, but willow and wild rose bushes thrive along the river banks and in some places form almost impenetrable thickets. The elevation of the railroad through the valley is about 4300 to 4500 feet above sea level.

During May and June I had a chance to see many of the birds of this section, and when possible I spent my time along the river collecting birds and eggs. There are very few birds here compared to the many found in California, and collecting has to be done while you are enduring torments from the mosquitos that breed in great numbers along the banks of the stream.

The following is a list of the birds I observed. I noted several which are not included as they were too far away for certain identification.

Larus californicus. California Gull. Several seen flying through the valley in May.

Sterna forsteri. Forster Tern. Common along the river. Flocks of as high as ten seen flying slowly over the sloughs.

Hydrochelidon n. surinamensis. American Black Tern. One seen near Iron Point June 1. Several others seen later in the month.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. American White Pelican. Wing of one found at Iron Point, May 13. None seen in the live state.

Anas boschas. Mallard. Common. Ducklings observed May 28 near Golconda.

Mareca americana. Baldpate. A flock of six or seven seen May 15 near Stone House.

Querquedula cyanoptera. Common Teal. Common.

Dafila acuta. Pintail. Several seen near Stone House in May.

Aythya vallisneria. Canvas-back. Not uncommon.

Botaurus lentiginosus. American Bittern. Several seen in a swamp near Stone House early in May.

Ardea herodias. Great Blue Heron. Often seen along the river especially in the sloughs.

Nycticorax n. naevius. Black-crowned Night Heron. Noted near Golconda.

Fulica americana. American Coot. A few observed in the sloughs near Stone House.

Steganopus tricolor. Wilson Phalarope. A few seen in the marshy meadows June 1.

Recurvirostra americana. Avocet. Common along the banks of alkaline ponds.

Himantopus mexicanus. Black-necked Stilt. Common in June wherever there were alkaline pools.

Gallinago delicata. Wilson Snipe. Observed June 3, near Stone House.

Symphemia s. inornata. Western Willet. Rare.

Actitis macularia. Spotted Sandpiper. Common in suitable localities.

Ægialitis vocifera. Killdeer. Very common along river bottom.

Ægialitis nivosus. Snowy Plover. A few seen along the shores of ponds early in May.

Centrocercus urophasianus. Sage Grouse. A few small flocks observed in the canyons near Golconda at an elevation of about 6000 feet.

Zenaidura macroura. Mourning Dove. Very common.

Cathartes aura. Turkey Vulture. Common.

Buteo b. calurus. Western Red-tail. Not uncommon. Found nesting in thorny bushes from six to fifteen feet from the ground. Both light and dark extremes noted. Several old nests which probably belonged to this species noticed on rocky cliffs.

Buteo swainsoni. Swainson Hawk. Not uncommon.

Falco mexicanus. Prairie Falcon. The only one noted was seen near Golconda, May 28.

Falco s. phalaena. Desert Sparrow Hawk. One observed near Golconda.

Pandion h. carolinensis. Fish Hawk. Two seen on a telegraph pole near Iron Point June 1.

(To be concluded)



MR. E. W. NELSON

Mr. E. W. Nelson, our authority on Mexican birds, may be said to have accomplished the greater part of his ornithological work at the two extremes of the continent—namely, in northern Alaska and in Mexico. Although as early as 1875 he published Notes on Birds observed in Portions of Utah, Nevada, and California, and later several articles on the birds of Illinois, his first extensive paper was the Birds of Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean, contained in the Cruise of the Corwin (1881), which was followed in 1887 by the Report upon Natural History Collections Made in Alaska. Since then he has published largely on the ornithology of our southwestern frontier and of Mexico. Mr. Nelson was a member of the Death Valley Expedition, and, assisted by Mr. E. A. Goldman, has penetrated every corner of Mexico in the interests of the Biological Survey. The results of these explorations have been the gathering of unparalleled collections, the discovery of many novelties^a, and what is perhaps most important, an accurate knowledge of the physiography and life zones of the vast and remarkable region. Mr. Nelson has also made substantial contributions to the literature of mammalogy^b and Alaskan ethnology.^c

^a Mr. Nelson has described over 150 species and subspecies of birds and mammals, the greater part from Mexico.

^b The Squirrels of Mexico and Central America, 1899, is the most extensive.

^c The Eskimo about Bering Straits, 1899.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Notes on the Habits of the Water Ousel (*Cinclus mexicanus*).—My attention was first drawn to these birds by a gentleman who claimed he had seen them eat young salmon. At the first opportunity I began watching to see if I could verify his statement.

The birds are seen at all hours of the day flying near the surface of the water, chasing each other from stone to stone, until they alight on some large boulder where they sit and sing. The song is as clear as a linnet's and considerably louder. The first time I heard one singing was on the 15th of October. The old birds were feeding their young until October 7, and whether this prevented their singing, or whether they do not begin to sing until cold weather, as the people here say, I cannot just now definitely state.

So far as I have been able to observe, their food consists of insect larvæ, water-bugs, and salmon eggs and young fry. In their search for food they alight on the surface of the water and paddle about with their wings, their feet, I believe, being absolutely useless at this time. They can make headway easily against a strong current. In moving over the water they dip their head at intervals beneath the surface, drawing the white, nictitating membrane over the eyeball before each dip. In this way they locate their food before diving. Once the food is seen they dive immediately and bring it up in their bill, swallowing after they reach the surface. They always come to the surface in nearly exactly the same place that they go down, and I have seen them dive repeatedly for salmon eggs, and bring them up, in two feet of swift water. Their stay under water is short, not longer than ten seconds.

The larva of a small black fly that infests the waters here, and attaches itself to every submerged stone or stick, forms a great part of the food of the ousel. He perches himself on a rock in mid-stream, dives above it, allows the current to carry him back past the stone, and tears off the larva as he goes by.

One bird found his way into the hatching house, one day, through the aperture which allows the water to come in from the flume outside. The hole is submerged three inches under water, yet the bird never hesitated when frightened to find the opening and go out.—J. S. BURCHAM, *Lilloet, B. C.*

Eggs of Flammulated Screech Owl and Western Evening Grosbeak taken in Estes Park, Colorado.—There was taken in Estes Park, Larimer Co., Colorado, by my 'hired assassin' last June, 1903, two sets of eggs of three each of the flammulated screech owl (*Megascops flammeola*) with two female birds. There was taken also the nest, a set of four and the parents of the western evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus montanus*). The eggs were prepared successfully.—FRED M. DILLE, *Longmont, Colo.*

[Mr. Dille has promised an account of these 'finds,' with photographs, for an early issue.—ED.]

California Vulture in San Mateo Co., California.—One afternoon about the middle of January (1904) Prof. Harold Heath of Stanford University saw a California vulture (*Gymnogyps californianus*) a short distance west of the university, near a place locally known as the 'Basaltic Columns.' What was probably the same individual was again seen a week later by Mr. Ernest Dudley, about a mile from the first station.—WALTER K. FISHER, *Palo Alto, Cal.*

Notes on the Birds of Hoopa Valley, California.—Hoopa Valley is a curious little Upper Sonoran 'island' tucked away among the mountains of Humboldt county. It is not more than six miles long by two broad and is a mere widening of the canyon of Trinity River about twelve miles south of the mouth. The valley occupies the center of the Hoopa Indian reservation, and is a secluded spot of great natural beauty. Steep mountains rise on all sides, pierced only on the north and south by the narrow canyon of the Trinity. These mountains are on the borderland between Humid and Arid Transition and they possess a singular charm from the large proportion of deciduous trees which one encounters; black, *garryana*, golden-cup and tan-bark (*densiflora*) oaks, chinquapins (*Castanopsis chrysophylla*), and madrones being mixed with Douglas spruces, incense cedars, and a few yellow and sugar pines.

But it is the valley which claims our attention. Here are groves of digger pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), and thickets of *Ceanothus cuneatus* and *Arctostaphylos manzanita*, red-bud (*Cercis occidentalis*), Christmas-berry (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), *Smilax californica*, and wild grape (*Vitis californica*). All will be recognized as characteristic Upper Sonoran species.

The following birds are found about the borders of the valley or in the mountains near. They are the ordinary Transition species occurring in the coast ranges. Starred * species are rare:

a. The easiest way to reach Hoopa Valley is by wagon road from Blue Lake, near Humboldt Bay. The writer had a drive of two days from this place over the Hoopa mountains, and spent from May 29 to June 7, 1899 either in the valley or in the mountains near.

Oreortyx pictus
Lophortyx californicus (Sonoran also)
Dryobates villosus harrisi *
Colaptes cafer collaris
Selasphorus (alleni?)
Contopus richardsoni *
Cyanocitta stelleri carbonacea

Contopus borealis * (higher mountains only)
 Canadian
Junco hyemalis thurberi
Piranga ludoviciana
Geothlypis tolmiei
Cinclus mexicanus
Merula migratoria propinqua

The following 'non-committal' species, indicative of no zone in particular, occur mostly in the valley:

Cathartes aura
Buteo borealis calurus
Falco sparverius
Corvus americanus

Scolecophagus cyanocephalus
Hirundo erythrogastra
Petrochelidon lunifrons

Finally the species found exclusively in the valley are with few exceptions diagnostic of the Upper Sonoran zone. Such forms are familiar birds throughout this zone in California, and are marked thus *.

Zenaidura macroura. * Common everywhere in the valley. Though this is a wandering bird it breeds most frequently in the Upper Sonoran zone.

Tyrannus verticalis. * A common bird in the open valley.

Aphelocoma californica. * This proved to be an abundant bird, spending much time in young groves of *garryana* oaks. The bird taken was gorged with spiders. Joseph Grinnell has separated the jay of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, under the subspecific name *immanis*, on the strength of its exceptionally long tail and somewhat stouter build. The Hoopa bird is clearly *californica*, as are those from Siskiyou and Lassen counties, which I have examined. On the other hand a specimen from Klamath Falls, Oregon, is precisely intermediate.

Sturnella neglecta. * Common. (Breeds also in Transition.)

Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis. Rare.

Chondestes grammacus strigatus. * Abundant in open.

Spizella socialis arizonæ. Common in digger pine groves and *Ceanothus cuneatus* thickets.

Pipilo maculatus oregonus. Common.

Pipilo crissalis. * Common, and a characteristic bird of the valley.

Zamelodia melanocephala. * Common.

Cyanospiza amena. * Common, especially in the *Ceanothus cuneatus* thickets.

Vireo gilvus swainsoni. Very common.

Dendroica aestiva. A common bird among the willow thickets and smilax tangles by the river.

Dendroica nigrescens. * Several were observed among the *Ceanothus cuneatus* and digger pine thickets.

Icteria virens longicauda. * A common and characteristic bird; one continually heard but not often seen. I heard one sing at intervals till late at night, though there was no moon.—
 WALTER K. FISHER.

Cactus Wrens.—Since the appearance of Mr. Swarth's paper on "The Status of the Southern California Cactus Wren" I have had an opportunity to examine Mr. Anthony's series of *Heleodytes*. As these, with the entire collection, are to go east and will be lost to western workers I made a hasty study of them, with Mr. Anthony's permission, as being the last opportunity. I sum up my conclusions as follows.

The distribution of *affinis* is southern Lower California; that of *bryanti* is central and northern Lower California, blending into *couesi* (or *anthonyi*) near the border. In the specimens which I examined more *couesi* were from south of the border than *bryanti* from north of it. A male and a female from San Diego I should assign to *bryanti*.

I feel doubtful of the status of *anthonyi* Mearns, as I have no skins from Texas for comparison, but, like Mr. Swarth, I am inclined to consider it a synonym of *couesi*. The Anthony collection includes half a dozen New Mexican examples. A superficial examination did not show much difference in size or shape of bill or in general proportions. I did not have time to make detailed measurements. The separation of the various subspecies seems to rest on coloration. The color differences are mainly as follows.

Affinis: tail with the intermediate rectrices nearly as well barred with white as the outer ones; abdomen with scarcely any fulvous tinge; entire lower surface, from bill to tail, nearly evenly spotted with black, these spots rounded in form; crown light colored, vandyke brown or mummy brown; ground color of back reddish bistre; white stripes of back distinct, linear.

Bryanti: tail nearly as perfectly barred as in *affinis*; abdomen with a fulvous tinge, intermediate in depth between *affinis* and *couesi*; throat with heavier spots, contrasting with the less

spotted belly; crown sepia; ground color of back bistre; white stripes of back with a tendency to break up into two sagittate or cuneate spots through invasion of the median part of the blackish parallel borders.

Couesi, (or *anthonyi*, if distinct from *couesi*) as found in California: tail with the intermediate rectrices mostly black, the white bars on the inner webs often reduced to one or two white spots; ground color of abdomen and flanks fulvous; chin white; throat heavily spotted with black, sometimes nearly solid black, and strongly contrasting with the scantily spotted belly and flanks, the spots on these parts more or less linear; crown varying from seal brown on the coast (at San Diego) to sepia in the interior; the white stripes on the back in the Californian coast region and in Arizona and New Mexico are broken into spots as in *bryanti*, while in those from the Colorado Desert region they are linear as in *affinis*.—FRANK STEPHENS, *San Diego, Cal.*

+ **Dusky Horned Lark in Lake County.**—Mr. A. W. Johnson has recently sent me a specimen of *Otocoris alpestris merrilli* which he took at Red Hill Ranch near Upper Lake, Lake county, California, November 13, 1893. It was one of a large flock of similar birds which remained in the vicinity about three weeks. Mr. Johnson states that this is the only time that he has ever met with any sort of horned lark in Lake county, and doubtless the flock observed were winter visitants from the northeast. I also have a skin of *O. a. merrilli* taken by M. P. Anderson at Yreka, California, March 14, 1902.—J. GRINNELL, *Pasadena, Cal.*

THE EDITOR'S BOOK SHELF

THE BIRDS OF FERGUS COUNTY, MONTANA. By P. M. SILLOWAY. Bulletin No. 1, Fergus County Free High School. 8 vo. 78 pages; numerous halftone plates. Lewistown, Mont. 1903.

The Birds of Fergus County, Montana, is really a handbook of the birds to be found in central Montana. An introductory sketch of the topography of Fergus county, with map, is followed by a Partial Bibliography of Montana Birds. Under each species biographical and distribution notes are recorded, with a paragraph on "Distinguishing Features"—a brief description to aid the general reader in recognizing the bird. An analysis of the list, given at the end, shows that thirty species are permanent residents; 101 species summer residents, 31 species migrants, 13 species winter residents or visitors, and 4 other visitors; total 179 species. Numerous halftones of live birds, nests and eggs, by M. J. Elrod and E. R. Warren, add much to the usefulness of this excellent piece of work.

PAPERS FROM THE HOPKINS-STANFORD GALAPAGOS EXPEDITION, 1898-1899. XVI BIRDS. By ROBERT EVANS SNODGRASS and EDMUND HELLER. From Proc. Wash. Acad. Sci. V, Jan. 28, 1904, pp. 231-372.

In this paper the authors present the ornithological results of their explorations among the Galapagos Archipelago, and 109 species and subspecies are listed, extending through 31 families. Under each species is given pertinent synonymy, range, field observations and often critical notes. Measurements and notes on life colors are also frequently included. Naturally the greatest interest centers about the various species of the three peculiar Galapagos genera, *Geospiza*, *Certhidea* and *Nesomimus*, the accounts of which are particularly full, including description of plumage stages, pterylosis, color of bills, relationship between color of bill and plumage, and maturity, nature of change from one phase of plumage to next—moulting, habits, song, nests and eggs.

In the case of those species which include several races the authors have made an innovation. "A number is given to each species of a genus, and this number is intended to stand, not for the form first named, but for the sum of all the subspecies, where subspecies that compose the species occur, not this number and a letter for each of the other subspecies as in the A. O. U. Check List. Each variety of a species is lettered. Thus: 63, *Geospiza fortis* consists of 63a, *G. fortis fortis*, 63b, *G. fortis fratercula*, etc; not 63, *Geospiza fortis*; 63a *G. fortis fratercula*." In the text the word "series" follows the species heading, thus: 55. THE GEOSPIZA PROSTHEMELAS SERIES. *Cactospiza*, *Camarhynchus* and *Cactornis* are regarded as subgenera of *Geospiza*.

The present paper is a very carefully prepared and valuable contribution to our knowledge of the avifauna of the Galapagos.

A REVISION OF THE AMERICAN GREAT HORNED OWLS. By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER. From Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. XXVII, 1904, p. 177-192.

Mr. Oberholser has given us a revision of the American forms of the genus *Asio* (which supercedes *Bubo*) and these he considers are referable to one species, the various races being intimately connected by individual or geographical intergrades. On this account the specific designation changes to *magellanicus*, which has precedence over *virginianus*. Sixteen forms are recognized, of which six are new. *Asio magellanicus icelus*, from San Luis Obispo, Cal., ranges over the coast of California north to about 35° north latitude. *A. m. lagophonus*, from Fort Walla Walla, ranges over Washington and northern Oregon (excepting the coast region), and Idaho; north through eastern and central British Columbia to Cook Inlet and the interior of Alaska. *A. m. heterocnemis* hails from Labrador, and *A. m. algistus* from the northwest coast region of Alaska. The other two come from Costa Rica and Mexico. The following are now the recognized Californian forms: *Asio magellanicus pallescens* (Stone), southeastern portion of state; *pacificus* (Cassin), "California, except the southeastern part and the northern and central coast districts; extending northward to Fort Klamath, Oregon, eastward to the San Francisco Mts., Ariz." (Dulzura, San Diego, St. Tejon, Fullerton, San Bernardino, Ft. Crook, Kern Lakes, Red Bluff; *icelus* Oberholser (San Luis Obispo, Redwood City, Nicasio).

Mr. Oberholser has discovered the interesting fact "that there exists in at least several of the American forms, and probably in not a few of the old world species as well, a dichromatism comparable to that of the genus *Otus* [*Megascops*] though perhaps not so impressive, which is manifested in a light and a dark, sometimes also a rufous or ochraceous, phase, independent of sex, age, season, or locality; in extreme conditions entirely distinct, yet completely connected by various intermediates. This dichromatism, or rather, polychromatism, together with better knowledge of actual distribution, serve to explain away the supposed interrupted distribution of one or two West American races."

An Analytical Key to the American Forms of *Asio*, Based on Adult Females, is included in this welcome and valuable paper.

A REVIEW OF THE WRENS OF THE GENUS *TROGLODYTES*. By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER. From Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. XXVII, 1904, 197-210.

The genus as here restricted comprises a group of wrens that is wholly American, 37 species and subspecies being recognized, of which three are new. The West Indian forms commonly attributed to *Thryothorus* are included, and a new genus, *Thryorchilus*, founded on *Troglodytes browni* Bangs is erected. The revision does not affect the status of the forms now recognized in the United States.—WALTER K. FISHER.

NEWS NOTES

Joseph Grinnell and Joseph Mailliard spent the Christmas holidays collecting at Palm Springs. An account of their trip is given on another page.

At the last A. O. U. Congress R. E. Snodgrass was elected Member of the Union.

W. Otto Emerson writes that the first *Selasphorus rufus* passed northward through Haywards, February 16, "like a streak of fire." Ever since then meteors have been at a discount in Haywards.

The Southern Division recently held a successful public meeting at Throop Institute, Pasadena. Over 150 visitors were present and a number of popular papers were read by Dr. Newkirk, Prof. Grinnell, and others.

At the A. O. U. Congress the Union voted to abolish the 'bond clause' from its model bird law.

A. C. McClurg and Company have just issued a popular book on California birds by Mrs. Irene Grosvenor Wheelock. This will be reviewed in our next issue.

Joseph Mailliard recently read a paper entitled, "A Midwinter Trip to the Colorado Desert" before the Section of Ornithology, California Academy of Sciences.

Edmund Heller is collecting in Mexico for the Field Columbian Museum of Chicago.

The Delaware Valley Ornithological Club has recently issued the seventh number of *Cassinia*, for 1903. The leading article, John K. Townsend, with portrait, is contributed by Witmer Stone. Among the other articles we note Water Birds of the Middle Delaware Valley by Henry W. Fowler. The brochure is beautifully printed and is one of which the club may feel justly proud.

The Southern Division of the Cooper Club announces No. 4 of the Pacific Coast Avifauna series for the near future.

THE CONDOR

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WALTER K. FISHER,	Editor,	Palo Alto
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Minutes of Club Meetings

NORTHERN DIVISION

NOVEMBER.—Held at the Phi Kappa Psi House, Berkeley, Nov. 7, 1903. President Taylor in the chair. Owing to the resignation of Mr. Kaeding the Club was without a secretary. Mr. Thompson was appointed secretary pro tem. There were sixteen members and six visitors present, and after the reading and approving of the minutes of the previous meeting, three new members were elected: T. S. Palmer, Washington, D. C.; F. M. Chapman, New York City; and Geo. L. Kaeding, San Francisco. The resignations of Miss A. F. Keefer and R. Kocher were accepted.

Article II, section 1, as amended, was passed and accepted by the Southern Division. The amendment of Article III, section 1 was rejected.

Two communications were read, one from Mr. Kaeding, one from Mr. Bade. The following new members were proposed: Miss A. M. Brown, Pacific Grove; E. W. Nelson, Washington, D. C.; A. K. Fisher, Washington, D. C.; J. H. Bowles, Tacoma, Wash., by Mr. Fisher; E. Gifford, Alameda, by Mr. Cohen; C. W. Bowles, Tacoma, Wash., and L. A. Fuertes, Ithaca, N. Y., by Mr. Kaeding; Jessie E. Butler, Pasadena, by Mr. Grinnell, and F. E. Newbury, Alameda, by Mr. Taylor.

Upon motion of Mr. Emerson, Mr. Thompson was appointed secretary for the remainder of the year.

After a short intermission, the following were nominated as officers for the ensuing year: President, H. R. Taylor; Senior Vice-president, R. B. Moran; Junior Vice-president, W. Earle Mulliken; Treasurer, J. Grinnell; Secretary, Chas. S. Thompson. After some discussion, it was decided to hold the annual meeting at the residence of H. R. Taylor, Alameda. The following program was presented: "Observations in Illinois during the Summer of 1902," by Miss I. M. Eschenberg; "Clapper Rails," by

Mr. H. H. Bailey; "Nesting of the Pine Siskin," by Mr. H. W. Carriger. Meeting adjourned until January ninth, 1904.

CHAS. S. THOMPSON, Secretary.

JANUARY.—The annual meeting was held at the residence of President H. R. Taylor, Alameda, January 9, 1904. There were eighteen members and eight visitors present, among the latter, Mrs. J. E. Barlow. Nine new members were elected, as follows: E. W. Nelson, Washington, D. C., C. W. Bowles, Tacoma, Wash., Miss J. F. Butler, Pasadena, A. K. Fisher, Washington, D. C., J. H. Bowles, Tacoma, Wash., E. W. Gifford, Alameda; L. A. Fuertes, Ithaca, N. Y., F. E. Newberg, Alameda, and Miss A. M. Brown, Pacific Grove.

Five applications for membership were read: P. B. Peabody, Sundance, Wyo., and J. L. Childs, Floral Park, N. Y., being proposed by Mr. Grinnell, Miss Anna Wiebald, Oakland, by Miss Swett, C. W. Luce, Haywards, by Mr. Emerson, and Vernon Bailey, Washington, D. C., by Mr. Fisher.

The following officers were elected to serve during 1904. President, H. R. Taylor; Senior Vice-president, R. B. Moran; Junior Vice-president, E. Mulliken; Treasurer, Jos. Grinnell; Secretary, Chas. S. Thompson. Walter K. Fisher was appointed editor-in-chief of THE CONDOR, with J. Grinnell and R. E. Snodgrass as associates.

Mr. Emerson, in a few well-chosen words, congratulated Mr. Taylor on his reelection, voicing the sentiments of the Club. Mr. Taylor replied, and outlined his policy for the coming year. The following program was presented. Mr. Anderson read an interesting paper entitled "A Bird Island in Cook Inlet, Alaska," and Mr. Emerson entertained the assembly by a lecture on "Adaptations in the Bills and Feet of Birds." Mr. Emerson's lecture was illustrated by a fine display of bird skins.

After the program a vote of thanks was tendered the editors and manager of THE CONDOR for the able manner in which the paper had been conducted during 1903. The meeting adjourned, to meet in Oakland, March 5, 1904. All present then did ample justice to the bounteous spread which had been provided by the host, Mr. Taylor.

CHAS. S. THOMPSON, Secretary.

In Re Taylor's Catalogue

Through a misunderstanding I allowed my name to be used prematurely in connection with a proposed revision of Taylor's Catalogue, as per notice in January 1904 CONDOR. I now state that I am not connected with Taylor's Catalogue in any manner.—D. A. COHEN.

Mrs. Mabel Osgood Wright, in January *Bird Lore*, has a little sermon, with the suggestive text "Keep on Pedaling!" This is a good motto for any club, the Cooper Club among others. The application is not far to seek. There is a decided tendency, in any organization, to attempt the difficult feat of coasting up hill.

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FOR EXCHANGE AND SALE

Geo. and Geol. Surv. west 100th mer. V Zool., *Birds* (Henshaw) no plates, unbound. Contrib. Philippine Ornithology 1898 (Worcester and Brown). Birds of the Galapagos Archipelago (Ridgway). Bull. U. S. Dept. Agric. English Sparrow (Merriam and Barrows). Birds of the Commander Ids. and Kamtschatka (Stejneger). Birds of Kerguelen Island (J. H. Kidder & R. Coues). Catal. Birds of S. W. Mexico (Geo. N. Lawrence). Published writings of Geo. N. Lawrence. Prairie Ground Squirrel in Mississippi Valley (Vernon Bailey). Review N. Am. Birds, part I, Oscines 1866 (Baird). List of Birds of Oneida Co., N. Y. (Ralph and Bagge). California Water Birds III, So. Farallon Id (L. M. Loomis). Evolution of of Colors in N. A. Land Birds, colored charts (Keeler). Sequence of Plumages and Moults of Passerine Birds of N. Y. plates I-VII (Dwight). Bulletin Nuttall Ornithological Club, Vol. I-V (cash only). *Nidologist*, Nov. 93., Mch. '94, Sept. '95, 25c each. *Osprey* Sept. 96, May '97, Nov. and Dec. 1900 15c each. Oregon Naturalist Vol. II, No. 7, '95, Vol. V, Nos. 1-5, '97 20c each. Museum odd numbers. A number of minor bird papers; prices on others, apply. Exchange only for such as need. Wanted: Bailey's Handbook, Wilson's Amer. Ornithology, Goss' Birds of Kansas, B. B. and R. Land Birds 3 vols., Auk I to VI, Minot's Game Birds of New England, Samuel's Birds of N. England, and any separates or other ornithological publications not in my library.

W. OTTO EMERSON.
Haywards, Cal.

EXCHANGES

PINK SISKINS—I have 5 sets of siskin for sale, as follows: Three sets, nest and 3 egg each at \$6; nest and 4 eggs at \$7.50; nest and 3 eggs, one of the eggs dented by pencil at \$5. Also 2 partial sets, one of 2 eggs and one of 3 eggs, with nests, at \$3.50 and \$5 respectively. Also some less desirable sets to exchange for books and papers. Send list of papers, etc.

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